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## 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Towson Community Plan is the culmination of six years of analysis, review, discussion, debate, public hearings, newspaper articles, and letters to the editor. An immense amount of interest and energy on the part of the local citizenry, business community, development community, and planning professionals has resulted in a Towson Community Plan that attempts to balance the needs of all these diverse groups.

Originally, debate centered on issues of traffic and the scale of projects to be built in the Central Business District. The 1989 Walmsley Plan recommendations were concerned principally with the core of Towson. However, the residential communities surrounding the core rightly responded that the focus of the plan was much too narrow. That which is fostered in the center of Towson, they argued, necessarily impacts upon those communities encircling the center.

Accordingly, the Towson Plan Subcommittee of the Planning Board expanded the scope of the project to include the needs of the residential communities. A thorough analysis of the East Towson Enhancement Area was undertaken by that community. A preliminary analysis of the needs of other neighborhoods in close proximity to the core resulted in the recommendation that "Inner" and "Outer" neighborhoods be designated Community Conservation Areas.

While debate on the merits and methods of community conservation continues, the underlying issue is still unresolved as to who has the right to decide the future shape and scale of Towson. Property owners in the core are anguished by the assertion that a plan can diminish, as they see it, their development rights and the value of their property. Community members, on the other hand, seek greater influence over the future course of their home town.

In the final analysis, there is no simple response to these concerns. To a larger extent, forces beyond the control of anyone in the community, the business world, or the government will dictate how Towson grows and changes. The recession which lingers as this plan is approved indicates that little change will occur in the next few years. When the recession ends, the market demands for land use may be dramatically different.

The hope of this plan is that Towson will remain a special place to live, work and play. The Towson Community Plan aspires to be a guide for the remainder of the decade, paving the way for a reassessment of our County as the 21st century begins.

Thanks must be extended to all those who labored so long in the development of this plan. First of all, the staff of the Office of Planning and Zoning must be commended for their efforts in pulling

together the disparate elements of this plan into a workable whole. The staff spent countless hours with dedicated community members, property owners, developers, the Planning Board and the County Council in working through the issues.

Next, tireless community volunteers need to be recognized, from those who served on the original Towson Task Force to those who guided its final recommendations. With no stake in the plan other than preserving the community which they love, dozens of volunteers reviewed data, grappled with obscure planning theory, debated the implications of plan recommendations, and lobbied for adoption of the plan.

The willingness of the business community and developers in working with the planning staff and community volunteers must also be commended. They met the challenges addressed to them in many ways, particularly in devising workable standards for developing transportation management programs and for design review policies.

The members of the Planning Board's Towson Plan Subcommittee must also be given a major share of the commendations for this final version of the Towson Community Plan. It was their task, in a very short time frame, to merge the often conflicting testimony which they had heard at the Planning Board's Public Hearing, into one coherent document. The Subcommittee members rose to the challenge, presenting the County Council with the Towson Community Plan in October, 1991.

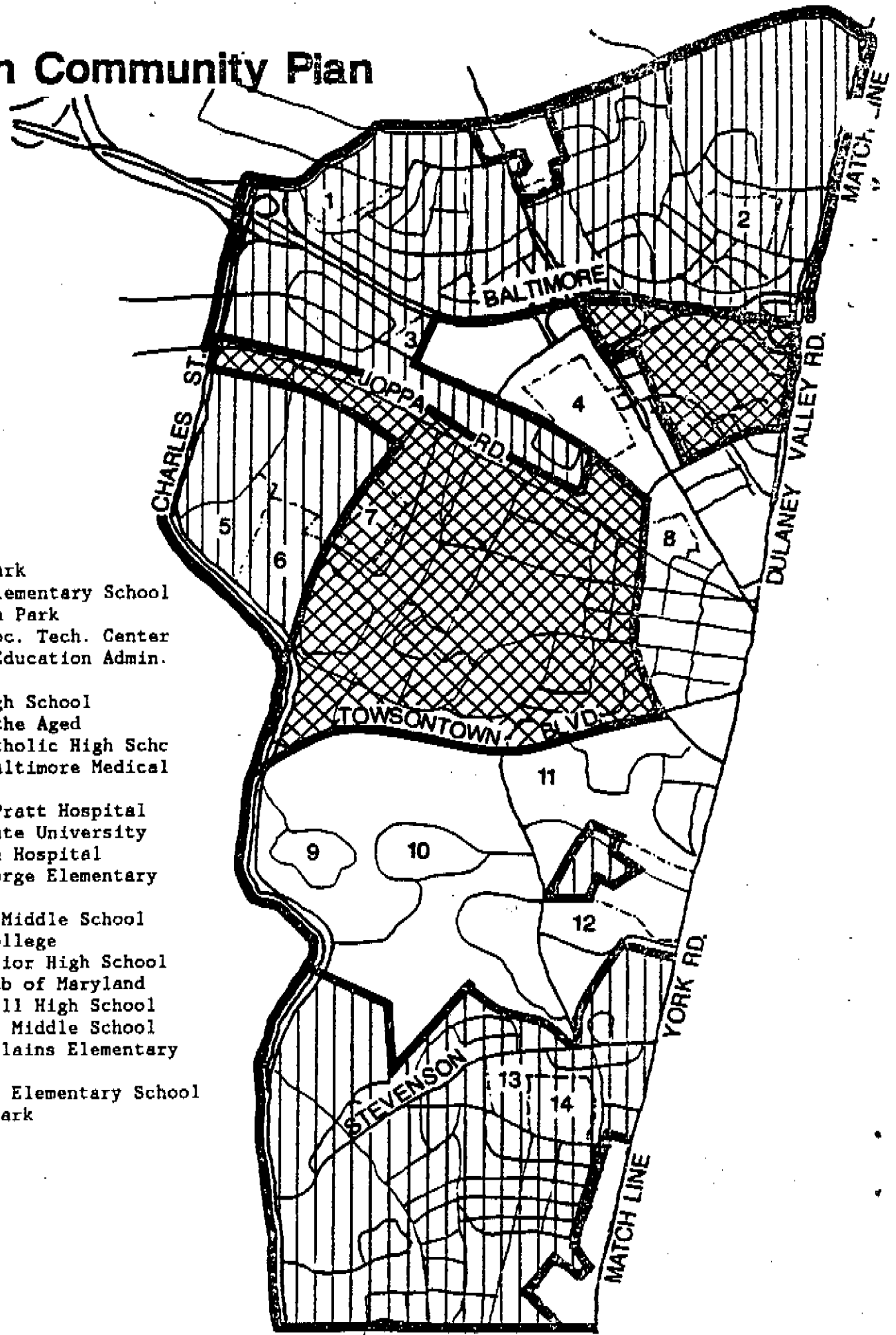
The hard work and dedication of all the aforementioned groups have resulted in the currently adopted Towson Community Plan. It represents the best judgement of the County Council as a guideline for the responsible development of Towson in the 1990's. As the Plan now moves into the implementation stage, the Council hopes that many of the people involved in the creation of the plan will also be involved in its implementation. By the end of this decade and the 20th Century, it is our hope that the people of Towson will look back at the Towson Community Plan as a vision realized.

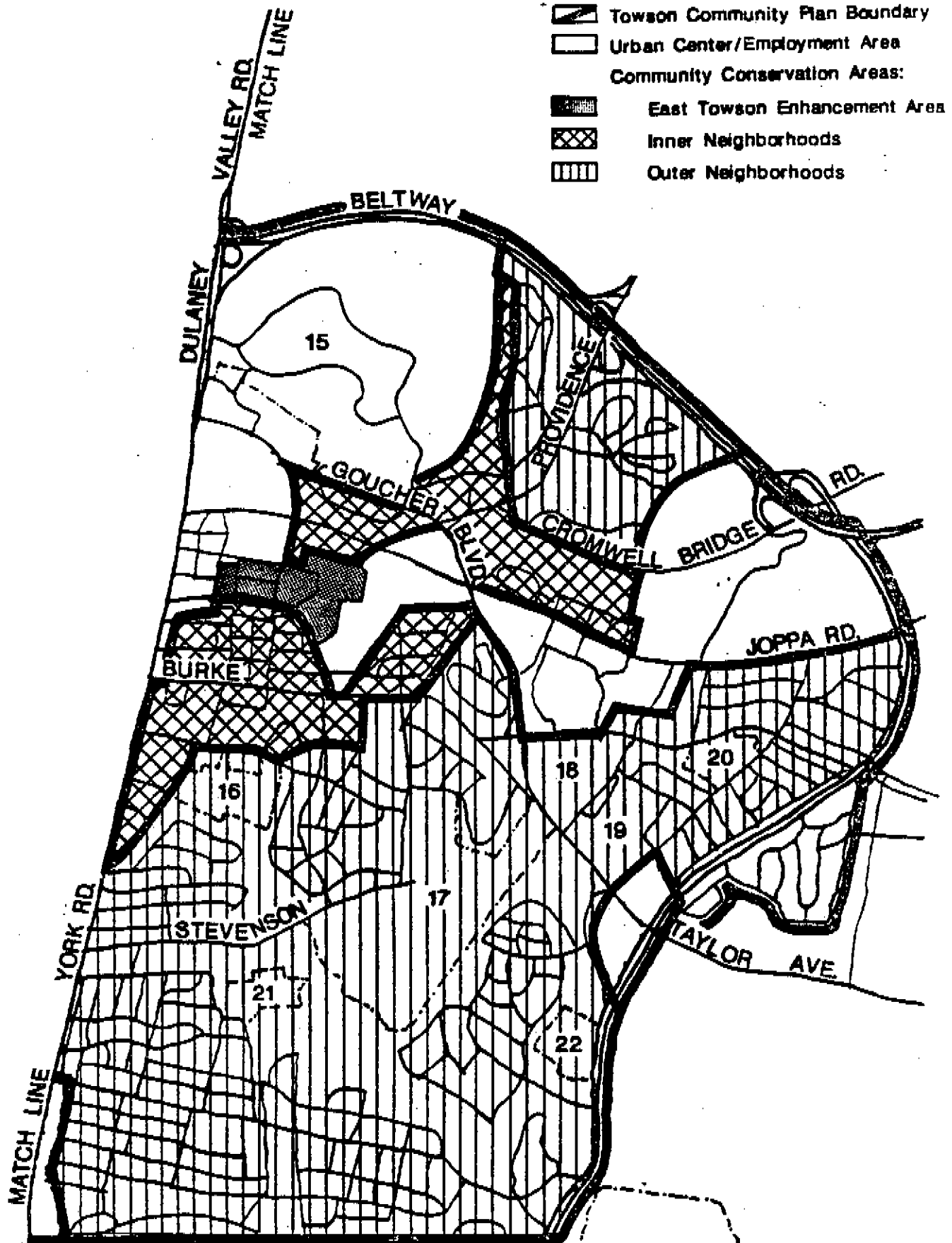
# Towson Community Plan

1. Orchard Park
2. Hampton Elementary School
3. Kenilworth Park
4. Central Voc. Tech. Center
5. Board of Education Admin. Office
6. Loyola High School
7. Home for the Aged
8. Towson Catholic High Schc
9. Greater Baltimore Medical Center
10. Sheppard Pratt Hospital
11. Towson State University
12. St. Joseph Hospital
13. Rodgers Forge Elementary School
14. Dumbarton Middle School
15. Goucher College
16. Towson Senior High School
17. County Club of Maryland
18. Calvert Hall High School
19. Loch Raven Middle School
20. Pleasant Plains Elementary School
21. Stoneleigh Elementary School
22. Glendale Park



North





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## 2. INTRODUCTION

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Towson, which continues to realize dramatic growth, has a unique opportunity to be the City of Baltimore County, and a symbol of the County's identity. Towson is the only area of the County that serves as the government, business, and financial center, is the home of major institutions and college campuses, and continues to be a popular place to live. These functions serve as a tremendous economic, employment and residential base.

The physical environment includes retail shops along the streets, high-rise residential buildings along the ridge, office buildings surrounding the Court House Square, and native stone churches grouped along Baltimore Avenue. These building groupings and local design features form distinct design sub-areas each with its own character. The tight, intensively developed street grid is the organizing element for all of these elements and has the most potential to create a human-scaled, special place unlike any other area in the County. The physical form and image of Towson envisioned by this plan can be the focal point of civic pride. Development intensity remains intact; the challenge is to improve the development design quality. Through a new design review process and urban design plan, future projects will be required to meet or exceed the design standards, streetscape guidelines and open space requirements set out in this document.

The well-maintained, richly landscaped neighborhoods that surround the core are a major asset to Towson and must be conserved. While the plan outlines a strategy for design, land use and transportation issues within the core, it recommends that the core remain within its present boundary to keep from expanding into the neighborhoods. The residential areas must retain their stability through conservation, maintenance, traffic reduction, parking management strategies and the strict enforcement of zoning and development regulations and controls.

The form and image described in this plan cannot be achieved overnight, but public improvements and future development projects will make Towson an enjoyable place to work, live and visit.

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### 3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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The major recommendations set out in the Towson Community Plan are as follows:

1. Extend the boundaries of the plan area to include residential neighborhoods and major institutions adjacent to the Towson Town Center. The plan boundaries generally extend from Seminary Avenue (west of Dulaney Valley) and the Beltway to the City line and from Charles Street to Loch Raven Boulevard except to include all of the Loch Raven Village Community Conservation area which extends east of Loch Raven Boulevard as diagrammed on Map 1.
2. Identify appropriate residential areas within the plan as Community Conservation Areas and prepare a zoning overlay district.
3. Implement the East Towson Enhancement Area recommendations to revitalize the historic African American Community.
4. Continue the following provisions of the BM-CT district as it applies to Towson to:
  - a. permit a maximum FAR of 5.5 as of right; and
  - b. allow building heights as per the height tent requirements except adjacent to the East Towson Enhancement Area.

Revise the BM-CT district to:

- a. establish height limits of 75 ft. for commercial uses and 90 ft. for residential uses adjacent to the East Towson Enhancement Area and illustrated on Map 2;
  - b. establish appropriate amenity open space requirements; and
  - c. ensure that new development meets the urban design and land use criteria and guidelines as established for each design sub-area in this document.
5. Require a master plan for the government campus and for all government owned buildings and properties in Towson.
6. The proposed Baltimore County Design Review Panel should review all projects within the Towson core based on the design guidelines. Recommendations of the Panel will be sent to the hearing officer.
7. Prepare an open space plan for the commercial core and surrounding neighborhoods based on the open space concept in the urban design plan.

8. Make improvements to the road network which would:
  - a. improve access to and through the town center;
  - b. restrict unnecessary traffic in residential neighborhoods; and
  - c. facilitate increased public transportation.
9. The Basic Service's exemption for Towson will remain. However, if, within the next five years, all of the following are not implemented, then the Basic Services exemption will be lifted and all projects within the BM-CT district will be subject to the same Basic Services Standards as the rest of the County:
  - a. Transportation analysis.
  - b. Transportation Management Association (TMA).
  - c. Analysis of appropriate basic services.
  - d. Legislation to establish community conservation areas is adopted.
10. Establish a public-private Transportation Management Association, TMA, which would be responsible for submitting standards for trip reduction to be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Basic Services Maps Update.
11. Identify the criteria for the subsequent preparation of a Towson parking management plan
12. Coordinate a committee of residents, local business people, and County agency personnel to review implementation efforts for the Plan.
13. Prepare an Historic Preservation Master Plan for Towson which will be subject to review and approval by the Planning Board and County Council. When approved the Plan will become an integral part of the Towson Community Plan.
14. Prepare a commercial corridor overlay district for Towson which would deal with issues such as signs, code enforcement, and design and landscaping.